

Wycombe Wanderers 1, Carshalton Ath 3

WYCOMBE Wanderers are beginning to realise how much they will miss mis-field Howard Kennedy, who is out for the rest of the season following a knee operation. In Tuesday night's friendly at home to Carshalton Athletic, Blues never controlled the middle of the field and so went down to a surprise, but deserved defeat, writes MICHAEL KNOX.

Kennedy's aggression and positive running were sorely missed against a highly efficient Carshalton side, who seem set to gain promotion from the Rothmans Isthmian League Division Two at the end of the season. If they do get up they could well hold their own in the top grade.

The visitors took the lead in the third minute, when Keith Mead, dilly-dallying on the edge of his penalty area, was caught in possession by Graham Dennis, who enjoyed a splendid game. Dennis, with only Peter Spittle to beat, calmly slipped the ball inside the left post.

Wanderers were slow to adjust to the heavy condition of the pitch and their passes were too often lightly weighted. The forwards created few chances in a pedestrian first half, because the service from midfield was virtually negligible.

Dylan Evans replaced Tony Horseman at half-time and 12 minutes later newcomer John Ord replaced Howard Kettleborough, who found the heavy pitch not to his liking.

Ord, who has played for Northern League side Whitley Bay did not really look the part. A small, light player, lacking in pace Ord did not involve himself in the game and he does not appear to be the answer to the Blues' striking problems.

However one bright spot from the Wycombe point of view was the performance of

England schoolboy trialist Neil Cordice, who came on for Pearson. With an alert mind, he was at once at ease with the players around him and showed enough speed, close control and strength to become a most useful player in the not-too-distant future. Taking up a position on the right wing, he was the outstanding Wycombe forward on the night.

Carshalton went further ahead on the hour, following another defensive build-up. Alan Phillips failed to control Mead's pass and once again Dennis was on hand to make Wycombe pay for this error. He intercepted the ball and took his time before shooting past Spittle.

Wycombe pulled a goal back two minutes later when Evans latched on to a defensive mistake in the heart of the Carshalton defence to drive the ball home from 15 yards. Blues really turned on the pressure forcing six more corners but some agile goalkeeping by Finch kept them at bay.

Then two minutes from the end Carshalton made sure of victory with a scrambled goal from centre-forward Alan Walker following a free-kick on the left wing. The ball may have taken a deflection before trickling past Spittle, who had earlier thwarted Dennis with an acrobatic save.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle, P. Birdseye, R. Davies, K. Mead, A. Phillips, J. Priestley, G. Fraser, M. Holifield, H. Kettleborough (sub. J. Ord 57 mins), I. Pearson (sub. N. Cordice 69 mins), A. Horseman (sub. D. Evans 46 mins).

CARSHALTON: I. Finch; R. Adaway, P. Dade, R. Higgs (sub. G. Bateup 46 mins), P. Gaydon, S. Williamson, D. Burke, R. Kember, A. Walker, G. Allen (sub. R. Bexley 46 mins), G. Dennis.
Referee: D. P. Lambourne (H. Wycombe).
Half-time 0-1. Scorers: Wycombe — Evans (62 mins); Carshalton — Dennis (3, 60), Walker (88).



Tilbury goalkeeper Barry Willson, who played a large part in their goalless draw at Loakes Park on Saturday, pushes a defender out of the way before going for the ball.